12

NATSUMI ANDO

Something's Wrong With Us

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12

CHARACTERS

Nao Hanaoka
A *wagashi* confectioner. Finds meaning in life by making *wagashi* that connect her to her late mother.

Taki-gawa
Helps Nao with Hanagasumi. His whole family loved Nao's mother's sweets.

Tsubaki used to call her "Sakura" back when they were children. Seeing the color red gives her severe heart palpitations.

Shiori
Tsubaki's former fiancée. She rescued Tsubaki from the Kogetsuan fire, which left a scar on her face.

Tsubaki Takatsuki
The heir to the historic *wagashi* shop Kogetsuan. Proposed to Nao without realizing that she is his childhood friend and actually fell in love with her over time.

His eyes sometimes fail him because of damage from the fire.

Old Master Takatsuki
Tsubaki's grandfather. The current head of Kogetsuan.

The Proprietress
Tsubaki's mother. She lost her husband (Tsubaki's father) 18 years ago, and has been desperate to make Tsubaki the head of Kogetsuan ever since.

STORY

Kogetsuan, an established *wagashi* shop with a four-hundred year history, was where Nao's mother worked as a live-in confectioner until she was framed for murder. Determined to clear her mother's name, Nao hid her identity and agreed to marry the shop's heir, Tsubaki. Although the two grew to love each other, a fire broke out at Kogetsuan on the night when Nao confronted the suspicious proprietress, and with her identity revealed, Nao was forced to disappear.

Relying on the sympathetic Takigawa, Nao managed to open her own shop, Hanagasumi, and now plans to take over Kogetsuan in order to free Tsubaki from the duty that binds him to the shop.

Upon learning that Nao is Itsuki's child and the rightful heir to Kogetsuan, the old master decides to have Tsubaki and Nao compete for the right to inherit the shop on the night of the *Joyasai* on New Year's Eve. Each of them strives to make a confection that speaks to the old master's soul: Nao with a *jo-namagashi* that makes use of a whole *yuzu* fruit, and Tsubaki with a *tsubaki mochi* that was the first sweet his father Itsuki taught him to make as a boy. At the final moment, the old master leaves the decision up to the proprietress, who doesn't know who made which sweet.

The proprietress makes her choice, confident she can pick Tsubaki's. Who will prevail?!

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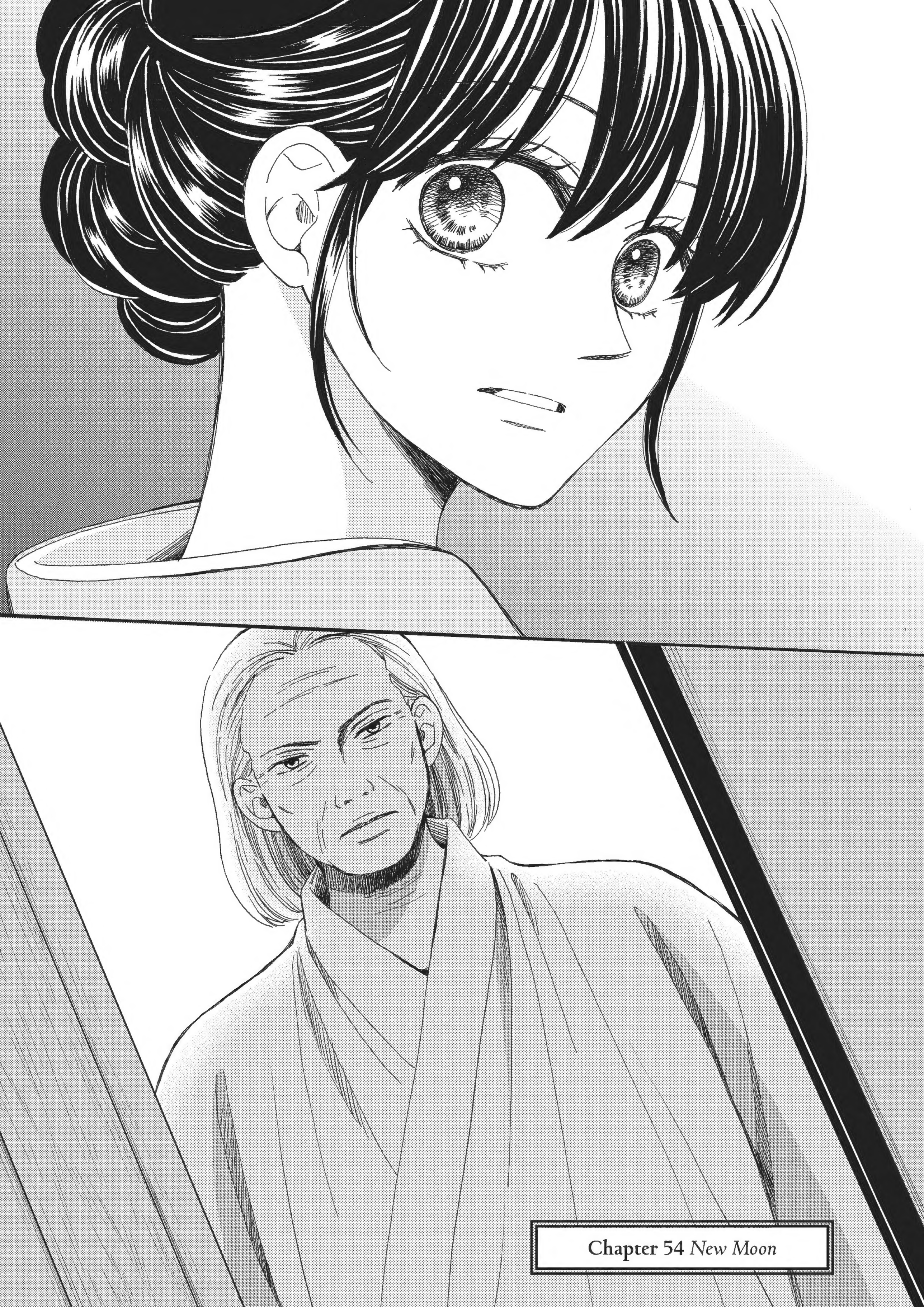


Chapter 54 *New Moon*

I GRANT KOGETSUAN...

...TO YOU.

I'M...

...INHERITING KOGETSUAN.

EVER SINCE THAT DAY...

...IT'S ALL...

...I'VE EVER WANTED.

FOR NAO

BUT I CHOSE THE *JO-NAMAGASHI* WITH THE *YUZU* MOTIF!

EXACTLY WHAT TSUBAKI WOULD MAKE!

A VISIBLY BEAUTIFUL AND ELABORATE CONFECTION...

WH...

WHY...?

...MADE THE *TSUBAKI MOCHI*...

TSUBAKI...

...THE VERY FIRST SWEET ITSUKI TAUGHT HIM TO MAKE.

OH...

TSUBAKI...

SST

THAT'S WHY I LEFT IT TO YOU!

YOU PROMISED!

YOU PROMISED ME!

YOU SAID YOU WOULD DEFINITELY WIN!

TSUBAKI!!

I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRUSTED YOU!

STOP IT, KYOKO!

THERE WERE SO MANY THINGS I COULD'VE DONE!

KYO—

WHY DO YOU THINK...

...I GAVE BIRTH TO YOU...?

HNK

BA-DUMP

HK—

O...

OLD MASTER!!

WEE WOO

WEE WOO

EMERGENCY
HOSPITAL

BIP ピッ

49

45
12

89

1.0

BIP ピッ

C C

HE MUST HAVE PUSHED HIMSELF PAST HIS LIMIT...

IS "TSUBAKI-SAN" HERE?

カラン
CLATTER

...JUST THE TWO OF YOU.

YOUR GRAND-FATHER SAYS HE WOULD LIKE TO TALK...

TSU-
BAKI...

...MY SOUL TREMBLE.

... MADE...

...YOU PREPARED...

...THE *TSUBAKI MOCHI*...

...DELICIOUS.

IT WAS TRULY...

...I COULDN'T CHOOSE THAT CONFECTION.

IT...

EVEN SO...

AND ONLY FOR ME...

...WAS MADE...

...FOR ME.

SOMEDAY...

SOMEDAY...

I WANT HIM TO TASTE IT.

I WANT GRANDFATHER...

...TO TASTE MY SWEETS.

I'M SO SORRY...

...TSUBAKI.

YOUR OWN SWEETS...

...THE KIND ONLY YOU CAN MAKE.

...EVERY-THING.

FOR...

FROM NOW ON...

...TO MAKE THE SWEETS YOU WANT.

...YOU'RE FREE...

WHATEVER WAY...

IT'S FOR YOUR OWN SAKE.

WITH NO...

...OBLIGATIONS.

...YOU WANT...

ONLY...

...TWO.

GRAND-FATHER!!

TAKATSUKI-SAN?!

YOU'VE STILL ONLY...

...EATEN TWO.

I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU TASTE SO MANY MORE!

TO MAKE UP FOR ALL THE ONES YOU NEVER ATE...

GRAND-
FA—

GRAND-
FATHER!!

...

TO
BEEE

"DELICIOUS."

IT WAS TRULY DELICIOUS.

PLOP

I ENJOYED THAT VERY MUCH.

THOSE WERE...

...THE VERY LAST WORDS I HEARD THE OLD MASTER SAY.

庵月光

Our Cherished Customers,
We apologize, but we will be closed until the fifth.

Kogetsuan Owner

Sign: Kogetsuan

HE *HAD* BEEN AILING FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

STILL, THIS IS SO SUDDEN...

KOGETSUAN WILL NEED A NEW OWNER.

I HEARD AN HEIR'S ALREADY BEEN NAMED.

...BECAUSE HE'S NOT THE ACTUAL GRANDSON, RIGHT?

REMEMBER THAT RUMOR?

HE CAN'T INHERIT KOGETSUAN...

APPARENTLY, TSUBAKI-KUN ISN'T THE ONE WHO'S TAKING OVER THE SHOP, THOUGH.

THEN WHO...?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

GET OUT AT ONCE!

THIS FUNERAL IS FOR RELATIVES AND STAFF ONLY!

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE HERE.

NAO-SAN.

WH...

KYOKO-SAN.

AS HIS GRAND-DAUGHTER.

PLEASE LET ME BID MY GRANDFATHER FAREWELL.

WHISPER ヒソ
WHISPER ヒソ

I DON'T THINK IT'S PRUDENT TO MAKE A BIG FUSS.

I WISH WE COULD HAVE TALKED MORE.

THERE WAS SO MUCH I WANTED TO TELL HIM.

THIS MEANS THAT NOW...

...I REALLY HAVE NO FAMILY LEFT.

WHISPER ヒソ

WHISPER ヒソ

SEE? THAT'S HER.

THE RIGHTFUL HEIR.

ISN'T SHE A BIT TOO YOUNG?

...!

TSUBAKI ...

WHERE IS TSUBAKI?

HE SHOULD BE THE ONE OFFERING INCENSE FIRST!

ズ
ザッ
SST

WHERE'S YOUR KIMONO?

WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?

WH...

BUT AREN'T RELATIVES SUPPOSED TO BE IN FULL FORMAL CLOTHES?
WHISPER
HE'S WEARING SEMIFORMAL ATTIRE.
WHISPER
THE RUMOR MUST BE TRUE, THEN.

TSUBAKI...

TSUBAKI-SAN!!

HOLD ON.

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE JUST GOING TO—

TSU—

JOJIMA.

YOU WERE ALWAYS SO SUPPORTIVE, YAMAGUCHI-SAN.

I'M VERY GRATEFUL.

PLEASE DISPOSE OF MY BELONGINGS AS YOU SEE FIT.

SO THAT...

...WAS NAO-SAN.

ACTU-
ALLY...

...I'M HERE TO CONGRATULATE YOU.

I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE HERE, TOO.

YOUR LITTLE SISTER'S STILL INSIDE.

NOW YOU HAVE WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED.

CONGRATU-
LATIONS, TAKIGAWA-
SAN.

AT LAST...

...YOU'VE TAKEN BACK WHAT'S RIGHTFULLY YOURS.

...OF WHAT HAPPENED EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO.

IT'S THE OPPOSITE...

...THAT DAY, HAVEN'T YOU?

SAKURA'S MOM.

...EVER SINCE...

YOU'VE BEEN DREAM-ING OF THIS...

I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.

PLEASE...

...WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T LET KOGETSUAN GO OUT OF BUSINESS.

JUST PROMISE ME ONE THING.

TSUBAKI-KUN WILL HATE YOU FOR IT.

HE'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU.

I HAVE NO RIGHT...

...TO CRY.

NO MATTER...

AFTER ALL...

...I'M THE ONE WHO GOT...

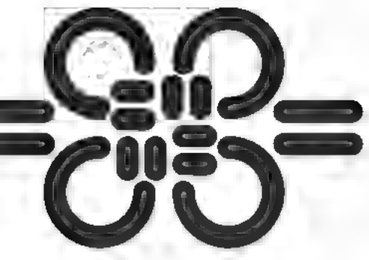
...WHAT I ALWAYS WANTED.

...WHAT HAPPENS NOW...

庵月光

...I'LL MAKE SURE THIS SHOP REMAINS STANDING.

Sign: Kogetsuan



Something's Wrong With Us

I'LL LEAVE YOUR STUFF HERE, NAO-SAN.

WHUMP

THANKS, JOJIMA-KUN.

SORRY YOU HAD TO COME HELP ON YOUR DAY OFF.

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT THIS ROOM, THOUGH?

THERE ARE BIGGER ONES AVAILABLE.

YEAH, THIS IS ALL I NEED.

IT'S CLOSE TO THE SHOP, TOO.

Chapter 55 *The Burokukai*

HERE I AM.

BACK AGAIN...

OH, HEY!

JOJIMA-KUN!

IF THAT'S ALL...

OKAY, THEN.

UM...

I'M SURE I'M GOING TO CAUSE YOU A LOT OF TROUBLE...

...BUT IT'S GOOD TO BE WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN.

...

I'VE REALLY COME BACK...

...

I DIDN'T...

...WANT YOU TO COME BACK HERE, NAO-SAN.

LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE.

SORRY, JUST TALKING TO MYSELF.

I'M SORRY, JOJIMA-KUN.

I HAVE SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO DO.

WAGASHI NOTES

I KNOW JOJIMA-KUN CAME TO HANAGASUMI HOPING I'D GIVE UP ON THIS SHOP...

ARE YOU GOING TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE CURSING KOGETSUAN?

I CHOSE THIS FATE FOR MYSELF.

I HAVE TAKEN OVER THIS SHOP FROM SOJURO, THE PREVIOUS HEAD.

MY NAME IS NAO HANAOKA.

I'LL BE LOOKING TO ALL OF YOU FOR GUIDANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN MY NEW POSITION.

WOULD YOU MIND IF I LENT A HAND?

ARE YOU MAKING SMOOTH BEAN PASTE?

YAMAGU-CHI-SAN.

OH, SORRY.

OUT OF THE WAY, PLEASE.

THE SAME PERSON HAS BEEN IN CHARGE OF THE BEAN PASTE FOR YEARS...

OH...

BUT...

ALREADY ON IT!

TIME TO GRILL THE BATTER!

WHO'S ENCASING THE BEAN PASTE?!

TODAY'S BATTER IS *MATCHA**!

*Powdered green tea

I HAVE TO START WITH WHATEVER I CAN DO.

THE KITCHEN ALREADY HAS AN ESTABLISHED ROUTINE...

...SO I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD LEAVE IT TO US.

OH... OF COURSE.

EXCUSE ME,

BUT THE BOXES HERE HAVEN'T BEEN WRAPPED YET.

BUT...

HANAOKA-SAN.

FOR TODAY'S *JO-NAMAGASHI*...

...WHICH ONES SHOULD WE PLACE IN FRONT?

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO WRAP THESE WHEN THE CUSTOMERS BUY THEM.

Tsubaki-san would have known right away.

MUTTER ボソ

HOLD ON A MOMENT.

TODAY'S *JO-NAMAGASHI*?

LET'S SEE...

SHH!

COULD YOU PLEASE PUT THE *KANBOTAN* AND *SECCHUKA* OUT IN THE FRONT?

...

I'M SORRY.

I GUESS I NEED TO BRACE MYSELF FOR A LOT MORE THAN I ANTICIPATED.

She was just a confectioner until the other day, wasn't she?

WHISPER ヒソ

Honestly.

WHISPER ヒソ

How is she not ashamed?

IT'S NOT JUST THAT I'M AN OUTSIDER.

I'M THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR TSUBAKI'S DEPARTURE.

...I NEED TO USE RED FOOD COLORING.

TO MAKE IT...

Brighter red

From below

Sakura bean paste

Smooth white bean paste

Gyokuran

MOMMA'S SAKURA YOKAN...

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

...!

DRIP

DRIP

I STILL CAN'T DO THIS?

WHY...?

NOT YET?

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

VWISH

!!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, NAO-SAN?

M...

MA'AM...?

I'M GENUINELY WORRIED.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GLARE.

IF YOU DON'T FEEL WELL, YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST RIGHT AWAY.

LET GO OF ME.

WE HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER TO KEEP THIS SHOP GOING NOW, AFTER ALL.

DON'T YOU AGREE?

YOU CAN START...

...BY CONFESSING THE TRUTH.

ADMIT THAT YOU WERE THE ONE WHO KILLED THE YOUNG MASTER...

CONFESS THE TRUTH AND ATONE FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE.

...AND THAT YOU FRAMED MY INNOCENT MOTHER.

HE MUST BE IN A MISERABLE STATE.

FORCED OUT OF HERE WITH NOWHERE TO GO.

POOR, POOR TSUBAKI.

YOU GO AHEAD AND REST UP IN THE COMFORT OF THIS WARM HOUSE.

THAT CAN'T BE TRUE.

TSUBAKI HAS TO BE GETTING HIS EYES TREATED...

...NOW THAT HE'S FREE FROM KOGETSUAN'S CURSE.

THAT WAY, HE CAN MAKE SWEETS AGAIN.

...

...IN A MISERABLE STATE.

GOOD NIGHT, NAO-SAN.

HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE

THAT'S IT.
I'M CERTAIN...

庵月光

Sign: Kogetsuan

NAO-SAN.

THERE'S SOMEONE HERE TO SEE YOU.

I'VE SHOWN HER INTO THE GUEST ROOM.

CAN I GET YOU TO COME RIGHT AWAY?

THANK YOU FOR ALWAYS TAKING CARE OF MY SISTER.

MY NAME IS YUKARI HASE.

I'M NEW AND INEXPERI-ENCED JUST LIKE YOU, NAO-SAN.

THERE'S SO MUCH TO LEARN.

THEN YOU'RE THE NEW OWNER OF HASEYA?

SHE'S SHIORI-SAN'S OLDER SISTER.

SHE OFFICIALLY INHERITED HASEYA INN AT THE START OF THE NEW YEAR.

ぽ。 WOW

NAO-SAN?

SHE LOOKS SO SOPHISTICATED...

...AND SO ELEGANT.

SHE'S CAPTIVATING.

GASP

YOU'RE SO PRETTY I FORGOT MYSELF.

I-I'M SORRY.

O-OH, I'LL GO GET SHIORI-SAN...

OH, THAT'S FINE.

I ACTUALLY CAME TODAY BECAUSE I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.

FOR ME...?

OH, MY.

ふふ HEE ふふ HEE

YOU'RE REALLY QUITE ADORABLE, NAO-SAN.

IT'S AN INVITATION TO THE *BUROKUKAI.*

Burokukai

R:SST

YOU MUST PARTICIPATE IN THEIR NEW YEAR'S GET-TOGETHER.

IT'S YOUR FIRST CRUCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS HEAD OF KOGETSUAN.

YOU MEAN...

...THE BUROKUKAI?

THEY MUST HAVE LONG AND PRESTIGIOUS HISTORIES, OF COURSE, BUT THE DETAILS ARE UNKNOWN.

OF THE COUNTLESS DISTINGUISHED ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE REGION, ONLY SIX ARE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE.

THE BUROKUKAI...

I'VE HEARD OF IT BEFORE...

SIX SPECIAL ESTABLISHMENTS, WITH NO NEW MEMBERS EVER ALLOWED...

THE ASSOCIATION FUNCTIONS AS A KIND OF SYMBOL FOR PRESERVING THE KAGA TRADITION.

NOT EVEN TSUBAKI-SAN HAS EVER BEEN ALLOWED TO ATTEND.

ONLY THE OFFICIAL HEAD CAN PARTICIPATE.

THE *BUROKUKAI* STRIVES TO PRESERVE CULTURE AND TRADITION...

AND PRIORITIZES THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY ABOVE ALL ELSE.

THAT'S WHY THE SIX ESTABLISHMENTS EVALUATE EACH OTHER EVERY YEAR TO SEE IF THEY ARE STILL WORTHY OF BEING PART OF THE GROUP.

SOPHISTICATION...

...MERIT...

...CONTRIBUTION.

IF ANYTHING IS LACKING IN THE SLIGHTEST, THAT BUSINESS WILL BE REMOVED IMMEDIATELY.

IN ITS ONE-HUNDRED-YEAR HISTORY, NONE OF ITS MEMBERS HAVE EVER BEEN REMOVED, INCLUDING KOGETSUAN.

IF...

...ANY OF THE MEMBERS WERE TO BE REMOVED, THAT WOULD MEAN THE END FOR THAT ESTABLISHMENT.

庵月光

Sign: Kogetsuan

NEXT WEDNES-DAY,

AT NOON...

...WE WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT HASEYA.

THE BUROKUKAI...

EVERYTHING I DO WILL REFLECT UPON KOGETSUAN.

THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A BUSINESS...

THE END...

...OF KOGETSUAN.

GULP ゴク!

WEDNESDAY

長谷屋

Sign: Haseya

NAO-SAN,

ARE YOU NERVOUS?

YOUR ARMS AND LEGS ARE OUT OF SYNC.

DON'T WORRY.

JUST SIT AND SMILE LIKE A DOLL, AND EVERYONE WILL BE NICE TO YOU.

YOU'RE SO ADORABLE.

I JUST HAVE TO INTRODUCE MYSELF PROPERLY...

PLEASE EXCUSE US.

YOU MAY ENTER.

I'VE DRILLED THE PROPER ETIQUETTE INTO MY HEAD.

I'VE READ EVERYTHING I COULD ABOUT THE BUROKUKAI'S HISTORY.

IT FEELS LIKE A THREAD PULLED TAUT.

SOLEMN...

...AND COLD.

WHAT'S WITH...

...THE MOOD IN THIS ROOM?

REJECTING EVEN THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF DISTORTION OR WEAKNESS...

...BUT SEEING THROUGH EVERYTHING AT THE SAME TIME.

I'M...

...COMPLETELY...

...PARALYZED.

WHAT...

...IS THIS?

THIS IS LIKE NOTHING...

...I'VE EVER EXPERIENCED.

OH, HEY!

YOU'RE HERE TOO, NAO-CHAN?

TAKIGAWA-SAN...

T...

THAT BRIGHT YELLOW KIMONO LOOKS GREAT ON YOU.

AH, THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU'RE A MEMBER OF THE *BUROKUKAI* STARTING TODAY.

OF COURSE...

TAKIGAWA-SAN'S HOUSE IS PRESTIGIOUS, TOO.

UH...

I DON'T THINK I'M AS NERVOUS NOW.

OH.

HE'S A MEMBER OF THE BUROKUKAI...

BEING SUCH A FLEDGLING, I MAY CAUSE YOU ALL TROUBLE, BUT I HOPE TO LOOK TO YOU ALL FOR GUIDANCE.

I'M NAO HANAOKA, HEAD OF KOGETSUAN.

T... TWENTY-FOUR.

HOW VERY ADORABLE, JUST AS WE HEARD FROM YUKARI-SAN.

TWENTY-FOUR?!

HOW OLD ARE YOU NOW?

Ryotei Midori
Asako Midorikawa

Kimono Shop Shirafuji
Keiichiro Shirafuji

THAT'S...

...ASTON-ISHING.

DON'T YOU REALIZE?

IT'S ABOUT THAT INTRO-DUCTION YOU GAVE.

WHAT ...?

I MUST SAY, I'M WORRIED ABOUT KOGETSUAN.

AND HERE THE HEAD DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO ***TALK*** PROPERLY...

YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE THE SWEETS FOR THE *ENYUKAI* AS WELL, AREN'T YOU?

...YOU'RE THE CHILD OF A MISTRESS.

WAH-TCHOO!

OOPS...

YOU REALLY ARE A FLEDGLING.

SO CALLING YOURSELF THAT...

...DOESN'T ADD ANY MODESTY TO YOUR INTRO-DUCTION.

BE-SIDES ...

...YOU KNOW?

OH...

AND HOW MUCH LONGER DO ***YOU*** INTEND TO ENGAGE IN THESE FRIVOLITIES?

HONEST-LY.

I'M SO SORRY.

ちーん HONK

I'VE GOT A BIT OF A COLD...

EVERYONE IS WHISPERING THAT YOU'RE PUTTING YOUR FAMILY NAME TO SHAME.

I'VE HEARD ONE OF YOUR LATEST HOBBIES IS RUNNING A *WAGASHI* SHOP.

TAKIGAWA-KUN...

YOUR FATHER WAS SUCH A MAN OF REPUTE.

HE MUST BE LAMENTING IN THE AFTERLIFE.

...IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE FUN.

WELL...

TAKI—

I'M SORRY.

HA,
HA...

I
DON'T
KNOW
ABOUT
THAT.

HE
PROBABLY
DOESN'T
CARE AT
ALL.

IT'S
MY FAULT
FOR BEING
IGNORANT.

I PROMISE TO
APPLY MYSELF
BETTER.

THAT'S ENOUGH
REPRIMANDING.

QUESTIONING THAT DECISION IS AN INSULT TO THE LATE SOJURO-SAN.

KOGETSUAN SURELY HAD DUE REASON TO CHOOSE HER AS THE NEW HEAD.

Akuta-ryu Household

Shigeru Akuta

I'M SURE IT WOULDN'T BE AN ISSUE...

"RITUAL"...?

WE WANT YOU TO MAKE US A CONFECTION.

...IF WE WENT THROUGH THE RITUAL FIRST BEFORE ASSESSING HER.

...SINCE KOGETSUAN'S FOUNDING, FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

A CONFECTION FOR OUR CEREMONIAL OFFERING AT THE END OF FEBRUARY.

SOMETHING MADE USING THE HEIRLOOM TOOLS...

... THAT HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS...

KA-TUNK

JUST WAIT, TSUBAKI.

ガラッ
TUNK

Something's Wrong With Us

Chapter 56 *Nao, Head of Kogetsuan*

THE *BUROKUKAI* PERFORMS A RITUAL EVERY YEAR AT THE END OF FEBRUARY TO CLEANSE EACH ESTABLISHMENT'S CHERISHED TOOLS—THE VERY SOUL OF EACH TRADE.

IT IS AN IMPORTANT CEREMONY TO PRAY FOR THE CONTINUED SUCCESS AND PROSPERITY OF EACH OF OUR BUSINESSES.

WHENEVER SOMEONE INHERITS KOGETSUAN, THAT PERSON IS IN CHARGE OF PREPARING THE CONFECTION TO BE OFFERED TO THE ENSHRINED DEITY, USING KOGETSUAN'S HEIRLOOM TOOLS.

...USING THOSE TOOLS...

SOMETHING I MUST MAKE...

...WHEN HE INHERITED KOGETSUAN.

...THE LATE ITSUKI TAKATSUKI-SAN DID JUST THAT...

EXACTLY TWENTY YEARS AGO...

HIS *RAKUGAN* WERE BREATHTAKINGLY BEAUTIFUL.

...ON KOGETSUAN'S SYMBOL*, THE MOON.

WITH *SAKURA* PETALS STREWN...

*Kogetsu means "shining moon."

I DOUBT SHE UNDERSTANDS HOW HEAVY THIS RESPONSIBILITY IS.

SHE'S ONLY TWENTY-FOUR.

BUT...

...IS SHE REALLY UP TO THE TASK?

THIS IS A TEST...

...TO SEE WHETHER I'M WORTHY AS THE HEAD OF KOGETSUAN...

WHAT DO YOU SAY, NAO-SAN?

...

...I WILL PREPARE A CONFECTION THAT IS TO THE *BUROKUKAI'S* SATISFACTION.

REST ASSURED...

MY FIRST TASK...

...AS HEAD OF KOGETSUAN.

SNOW AGAIN...

ㄟ ;ST

TAKIGAWA-SAN.

THE BEST THING TO DO...

...IS JUST LAUGH AND GO ALONG WITH WHAT THEY SAY.

HUH...?

JEEZ, YOU MADE ME SO NERVOUS, NAO-CHAN.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT START A FIGHT WITH THEM ANY SECOND.

THEY BRACE THEMSELVES AGAINST ANYTHING NEW AND REJECT IT ON INSTINCT.

THEY'VE ALWAYS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING TRADITION...

...SO THEY FEAR CHANGE ABOVE ALL ELSE.

YOUR FATHER WAS SUCH A MAN OF REPUTE.

HE MUST BE LAMENTING IN THE AFTERLIFE.

DON'T PROVOKE THEM.

AVOID ANYTHING THAT COULD OFFEND THEM IN THE SLIGHTEST.

THAT'S THE WAY TO DEAL WITH THEM.

...

BUT...

B...

HA, HA.

YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT ME? FORGET ABOUT IT.

THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR FATHER WOULD ACTUALLY THINK.

HOW ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT?

BUT THEY INSULT YOU WHEN THEY DON'T TRULY KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

I'M REALLY NOT OKAY WITH THAT!

EVEN THOUGH HE'S ALWAYS BY MY SIDE...

...AND WANTS TO MARRY ME.

BUT...

...I DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM, EITHER.

...WHAT MAKES YOU ANGRY, WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE UNHAPPY, WHAT YOUR HABITS ARE...

YOUR LIKES, YOUR DISLIKES...

I...

...WANT TO GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER, TAKIGAWA-SAN.

WHO YOU REALLY...

...I WANT TO KNOW WHO YOU REALLY ARE.

...DO YOU REALLY LIKE?

WHAT KIND OF SWEETS...

WHO YOU REALLY ARE...

FWUMP

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

TAKIGAWA-SAN?

...I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LOOK SO TENSE, ***KAORU-SAN.***

I MEAN...

YUKARI-SAN...

YOU SHOULDN'T BE ARGUING HERE, OF ALL PLACES.

WHO KNOWS WHAT RUMORS THEY MIGHT SPREAD?

YOU ***ARE*** ARGUING, AREN'T YOU?

UM...

YUKARI!!

"KAORU-SAN"?

DON'T YOU KNOW, NAO-SAN?

KAORU-SAN'S ACTUALLY—

O-OF COURSE IT IS.

OVER SOMETHING SO TRIVIAL, TOO!

はっ!

GASP

WHAT?

ALL I WAS GOING TO SAY IS THAT YOU'RE EMBARRASSED THAT YOUR NAME SOUNDS LIKE A GIRL'S. IS THAT *SO* BAD?

IT'S FOUR O'CLOCK ALREADY.

The snow let up, too.

WHOOPS.

WELL THEN, NAO-CHAN.

I'LL STOP BY KOGETSUAN AGAIN.

I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT HANAGASUMI, ANYWAY.

HAVE YOU...

...KNOWN TAKIGAWA-SAN FOR LONG?

...OUR FAMILIES HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR GENERATIONS.

IT'S A SMALL COMMUNITY, AFTER ALL.

OH, DEAR.

IT'S TIME I WENT BACK AS WELL.

NAO-SAN, I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR SWEETS.

...

IT'S STRANGE...

...TAKIGAWA-SAN'S EYES...

...REMINDED ME OF SOMEONE ELSE...

...JUST FOR A MOMENT.

...WHOSE?

BUT...

Sign: Kogetsuan

THE THING ABOUT TAKIGAWA-SAN BOTHERS ME...

...BUT FOR NOW, I HAVE TO FOCUS ON MAKING THE CONFECTION FOR THE BUROKUKAI.

DING チーン

FOR FIFTEEN YEARS...

GULP ゴク...

...THESE TOOLS HAVE BEEN LYING HERE...

...WITH NO ONE TO USE THEM.

GREAK

KA-
CHAK

AHH...!

GOOD NIGHT, NAO-SAN.

IT'S GONE!

HOW—?

THE BOX WITH THE TOOLS...

SHE COULDN'T HAVE—!!

SLAM

NOTHING...

GA-TUNK

VWSH

WHERE...

THE PROPRIETRESS'S THINGS...

WHERE DID SHE GO?!

THEY'RE ALL GONE...!

NAO-SAN!

SHE STOLE THE TOOLS...

IS SOMETHING WRONG?!

...THE TOOLS—

A...

ACTUALLY...

IT'S...IT'S NOTHING.

NO, I CAN'T TELL THEM...

THEY'RE WORRIED ENOUGH WITH ME RUNNING THE SHOP AS IT IS...

...!

YES, DID SHE STOP BY HERE AT ALL?

NOT THAT I KNOW OF.

KOGETSUAN'S PROPRIETRESS?

I HAVE TO FIX THIS ON MY OWN...!

I HAVE TO FIND HER.

NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN HER.

WHAT DO I DO?

I DON'T KNOW.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THE PROPRIETRESS MIGHT GO.

I HAVE TO FIND HER!

I'M HONK

I'M HOOONK

AND SOON...!

NAO-SAN!!

SHIORI-SAN.

SHIORI-SAN, HOW DID YOU...

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

WELL, YOU SEEMED OUT OF SORTS...

NAO-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THAT WAS DANGEROUS.

BUT, NAO-SAN...

N-NOTHING, REALLY...

I'M FINE. YOU HEAD BACK TO THE SHOP.

PLEASE, TELL ME.

THERE *IS* SOMETHING WRONG.

HER HAND'S SO COLD...

NAO-SAN!

IT...

IT REALLY ISN'T...

IF IT'S ABOUT THE SHOP...

YOU CAN'T RUN A SHOP ON YOUR OWN.

IT DOESN'T JUST BELONG TO YOU!

PROMISE ME ONE THING.

PLEASE... WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T LET KOGETSUAN GO OUT OF BUSINESS.

SHIORI...

...SAN.

Sign: Kogetsuan

庵月光

WHUMP

SHE COLLECTED ALL OF THIS...?

BEEP ピ
BOOP ピ
BEEP ピ

HELLO, IS THIS KAGURAYA INN?

THIS IS SHIORI HASE.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR PREVIOUS SUPPORT.

I'M CALLING TO ASK ABOUT SOMETHING...

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR INNS AND *RYOTEI* I COLLECTED BACK WHEN I WAS AT HASEYA.

WHAT IS ALL THIS?

THE PROPRIETRESS MAY HAVE BEEN TO ONE OF THESE.

I'LL GO THROUGH THE LIST AND ASK THEM.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD HELP ME.

IS THIS OTOWA-DOU?

I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE...

COULD YOU PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU SEE HER?

HELLO, MIYASHITATEI?

MY SISTERS ALWAYS SCOLDED ME FOR RELYING ON PEOPLE SO MUCH, THOUGH.

EVERYONE'S SO KIND.

THEN YOU TAKE CARE OF THESE ONES, NAO-SAN.

I-I'LL MAKE SOME CALLS, TOO!

IF YOU SEE HER, PLEASE LET US KNOW.

YES.

I THINK THAT'S ALL OF THEM.

YEAH.

IT'S QUITE LATE.

FOR NOW, LET'S TRUST THAT SOMEONE WILL CONTACT US.

HELLO?

YES,

SHE MAY BE WEARING HER HAIR DOWN.

WE THINK SHE HAS A LARGE BOX WITH HER.

CLUNK

PLEASE...

...LET US FIND HER.

IT'S SO GLOSSY...

CHESTNUT MANJU...

I HAD A BIT OF AN AVERSION TO MANJU BEFORE,

BUT ONCE I TRIED THEM, THEY WERE SO GOOD THAT I GOT HOOKED.

I COULDN'T STOP MYSELF, AND I PUT ON A WHOLE FIVE KILOS.

YOU HAVEN'T EATEN ANYTHING, HAVE YOU?

YOU MUST BE HUNGRY.

I KNOW, RIGHT?

F-FIVE KILOS?!

STEAM

STEAM

...THEY'RE EVEN BETTER IF YOU WRAP THEM IN FOIL AND TOAST THEM FOR A BIT.

...

BUT...

MMM

YOU'RE RIGHT...!

It's sinful!

HOW IS THIS SO GOOD?!

SHIORI-SAN.

THANK YOU FOR TODAY.

I...

...WAS IN SUCH A FRENZY, AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

LEFT TO MY OWN DEVICES, I MIGHT HAVE MESSED EVERY-THING UP.

...

THAT'S SO TRUE.

IT'S FUNNY.

...TOGETHER, AT KOGET-SUAN, EATING SWEETS.

JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO, I WOULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED THAT WE'D BE SITTING HERE...

I'M SORRY. I DON'T MEAN TO PRY...

I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT MY SISTER...

HUH?

UM, NAO-SAN.

CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION?

ARE YOU...

...UM...

...IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH TAKIGAWA-SAN?

ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO...

...WAS IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH MY SISTER.

...I BELIEVE TAKIGAWA-SAN...

YOU MEAN YUKARI-SAN...?

PLEASE BE WARY...

...OF YUKARI.

ANOTHER NEW MOON IS COMING.

A NIGHT WHEN THE MOON DOESN'T SHINE...

SHIKA-MACHI

ISHIKAWA PREFEC-TURE

OPEN

WHERE'S OUR BEER?

DAMN, I'M STARVING.

COULD YOU NOT SMOKE IN HERE?

GOD...

WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG?

CLATTER
カシャッ

YEAH?

IT MESSES WITH THE TASTE OF THE FOOD.

WE'RE FREE TO DO WHAT WE WANT, PRICK.

THE HELL?

THINK YOU'RE BETTER THAN US?!

ONLY THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE RULES...

...GET TO DO WHAT THEY WANT.

THUD

THOCK

EEEEK!

...!

はGASP!

...

URG...

TALK ABOUT LAME!

HE'S ALL TALK.

HUH.

HEY.

LET'S GO.

I'M AT YOSHINO, JUST ACROSS FROM THE POLICE STATION.

HELLO, POLICE?! PLEASE COME RIGHT AWAY!

THERE ARE NIGHTS WHEN THE MOON DOESN'T SHINE.

U

IT *IS* YOU, TSUBAKI-KUN!!

...TSUBAKI-KUN?

YUKO...

...SAN?

...AND SHINE ONCE MORE.

BUT THE MOON WILL WAX...

Something's Wrong With Us

Chapter 57 *Revelations*

NO MISSED CALLS

VOLUME

CHARACTE

CALL WAITING

"...WERE IN A RELATIONSHIP?"

"TAKIGAWA-SAN AND YUKARI-SAN..."

...AND THEY WEREN'T TOGETHER FOR LONG.

MY SISTER SEEMED MUCH MORE INVESTED THAN HE WAS...

YES, BUT...

IT WAS LIKE HE DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING...

HA GASP

I-I'M SORRY!

HE MIGHT NOT BE THAT WAY WITH YOU AT ALL!

IT'S JUST...

...WELL...

...I DIDN'T HAVE A GOOD IMPRESSION OF TAKIGAWA-SAN BACK THEN.

SOMETIMES, HE'D IGNORE...

...MY SISTER'S MESSAGES FOR DAYS.

...BUT HE WAS FICKLE.

HE WAS NEVER MENACING OR COLD...

IF...

...IF TAKIGAWA-SAN HADN'T BEEN THERE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED TO ME.

I MIGHT NOT EVEN BE ALIVE RIGHT NOW...

I WAS JUST A LITTLE WORRIED...

GRIP

キュ...

HE MEANS SO MUCH TO ME...

I WANT YOU TO MARRY ME.

I WANT TO PUT MY TRUST IN HIM...

...AND FACE HIM PROPERLY...

...WITH NO LIES OR DECEPTION.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME.

IT'S JUST A TINY CUT.

ARE YOU SURE YOUR FACE IS OKAY?

...

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN?

B...BUT REALLY, WHAT A SURPRISE.

WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT WE'D RUN INTO EACH OTHER IN A TINY TOWN LIKE THIS?

GOOD.

I'M GLAD IT WASN'T WORSE.

OH, ACTUALLY... NO SAKE FOR ME.

WHY? DO YOU NOT DRINK?

IT'S NOT THAT...

...

THAT LONG, HUH...?

YEAH?

IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS.

I RECENTLY HAD EYE SURGERY...

...

WHAT?!

SURGERY?!

A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

IS IT BAD...?

I WAS JUST HAVING TROUBLE WITH MY EYESIGHT.

BUT I'M ALL BETTER NOW.

WHEW 木

I SEE...

THANK GOODNESS YOU'VE RECOVERED.

EYESIGHT SEEMS SO CRUCIAL FOR A *WAGASHI* CONFEC-TIONER.

EVERYTHING'S SO DELICATE, AND THE SUBTLETIES OF COLOR ARE REALLY IMPORTANT, RIGHT?

YOU CLOSED UP YOUR PREVIOUS PLACE, DIDN'T YOU?

SO, WHY ARE YOU HERE, YUKO-SAN?

COUGH, COUGH.

!

...

YES, THANK GOODNESS...

I'M BACK HERE IN MY HOMETOWN, RUNNING A PLACE THAT'S PRACTICALLY A STREET STALL.

Y...

YUP.

THAT I'M NOT NAO-SAN'S REAL MOTHER?

YOU KNOW ALREADY, DON'T YOU?

...

SO SHE COULD TAKE KOGETSUAN FROM ME?

NAO...

...ASKED YOU TO PLAY THE PART, RIGHT?

WH...

WHAT ARE YOU—

YOU'RE WRONG.

THE EVENTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

NAO WAS FOUND OUT, AND SHE DISAPPEARED DURING THAT FIRE...

HOW DO YOU KNOW I'M WRONG?

NO!

THAT WAS BECAUSE–!

...

NO...

...YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG.

YUKO-SAN...?

WITH YOUR KID.

SHE WAS PREGNANT.

CLINK

カラン...

...

...CHILD?

A...

SHE WAS SO HEART-BROKEN.

IT WAS IN THE EARLY STAGES...

SHE KEPT BLAMING HERSELF...

...AND WITH THAT FIRE...

TSUBAKI.

I SUDDENLY MISSED YOUR FACE...

...TSUBAKI-SAN.

WH...

WHY...

WHY DIDN'T SHE TELL ME ABOUT SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT...?!

YOU REALLY LOVED HER AT SOME POINT, DIDN'T YOU?

LOOK...

...ISN'T THERE ANY WAY YOU COULD GET BACK TO-GETHER?

SORRY.

SHE MADE ME PROMISE TO NEVER TELL YOU...

SST

IN THE END...

...OUR RELATIONSHIP WAS NOTHING BUT A LIE.

ACTUALLY,

I THINK I'LL HAVE A DRINK AFTER ALL.

EVER SINCE WE MET...

FINDING EACH OTHER AGAIN...

...WE'VE DONE NOTHING BUT HURT EACH OTHER.

...WOULD JUST...

I WONDER IF NAO-CHAN...

8

Iwori

00:13

BIP

YES, HELLO?

Sign: Hanagasumi

...WILL FIND HER AS QUICKLY.

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME KNOW.

I SEE.

Sign: Kogetsuan

NO CALLS FROM ANYWHERE.

...

NO MISSED CALLS

NAO-SAN.

I'LL TRY THE ONES OUTSIDE OF THE CITY TODAY.

...WANT TO QUIT AT THE END OF THIS MONTH.

TWO OF THE CONFEC-TIONERS...

APPARENTLY, THEY GOT BETTER JOB OFFERS.

HUH?

QUIT...?

CAN I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?

I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SO EARLY.

PLUS...

...THEY SEEM TO BE UNSURE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF KOGETSUAN...

A...

ALL RIGHT...

I UNDER-STAND...

IT'S OKAY...

I GOT A CALL BACK!

NAO-SAN!

IT'S OKAY.

IT'S OKAY.

WE'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS I HELP IN THE KITCHEN.

REALLY, SHIORI-SAN?!

APPARENTLY, SHE STAYED AT IWORI INN LAST NIGHT.

YES.

IT WAS FROM AN INN AT FUKATANI ONSEN HOT SPRINGS.

PLEASE.

NAO-SAN!!

THEY'VE SEEN THE PROPRIETRESS!

PLEASE, LET THE TOOLS BE SAFE...

NAO-SAN.

...SHE JUST CHECKED OUT AND LEFT MOMENTS AGO.

ACTUALLY...

OUTDOOR BATHS IWORI

I GUESS SHE DOESN'T FEEL COMFORTABLE LEAVING KANAZAWA.

SHE'S STILL CLOSE BY!!

SHE HAS TO BE...

AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE...

HUFF HUFF

P

!!

MA'AM!!

THE SMELL OF KEROSENE...

...!

OH...!

!!

WHAT ARE YOU—

WH...

GOOD MORNING, NAO-SAN.

OH.

THREE YEARS AGO...

...I SHOULD HAVE LET THESE TOOLS BURN AWAY IN THE FIRE.

WON'T YOU JOIN ME FOR A BONFIRE?

OH, THAT'S RIGHT. IT WAS ALL BECAUSE OF FATHER.

WHY...

...DID I EVER RESCUE THEM?

IF ONLY MY ILLEGITIMATE TSUBAKI HAD BECOME HEAD OF KOGETSUAN...

WHAT FITTING REVENGE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN.

HE ONLY EVER SAW ME AS A TOOL.

I WANTED TO MAKE HIM PAY.

S...

STOP...

FOOM

DON'T!!

!

NAO-SAN!!

NAO-SAN, WATCH OUT!!

WHUMP

COUGH

COUGH

COUGH

COUGH

...!

GO OUT!

GO OUT!

I MADE A PROMISE.

I PROMISED TSUBAKI...

...THAT I'D PROTECT KOGETSUAN.

NAO-SAN...

AH!

FLICK

ぱっ

FLICK

NAO-SAN.

TH...

THANK GOOD-NESS...

THANK GOODNESS...!

WOBBLE

NAO-SA...

HONESTLY.

YOU'RE SO RECKLESS.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

WHAT A WRETCHED TURN OF AFFAIRS...

GASP...

...FOR THE FORMER PROPRIETRESS OF KOGETSUAN.

WHY DID MY FATHER...

...EVER FALL FOR A PERSON LIKE YOU?

...DID IT EVER CROSS YOUR MIND...

KYOKO-SAN...

OR HOW THAT FAMILY ENDED UP?

...HOW YOUR CONTINUED AFFAIR WITH MY FATHER...

...AFFECTED THE FAMILY WHO LOST HIM TO YOU?

...BUT...

I ALWAYS DREAMED...

...NOW THAT I HAVE, IT DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL BETTER AT ALL.

...OF SEEING YOU LIKE THIS.

OH, DON'T BE SO CRUEL.

YOUR FATHER WAS ***VERY*** NICE TO ME, YOU KNOW.

IF NOT KOGETSUAN...

...MAYBE I'LL GET TSUBAKI TO TAKE OVER THE TAKIGAWA HOUSEHOLD.

THAT'S RIGHT.

I MEAN...

...IT ONLY MAKES SENSE.

WHAT DO YOU—

DON'T YOU THINK HE'S MORE WORTHY THAN HIS INEPT OLDER BROTHER?

TSUBAKI IS A BLOOD RELATIVE OF THE TAKIGAWA HOUSE, AFTER ALL.

HE'S YOUR LITTLE BROTHER...

TSUBAKI...

WHY...

...ARE YOU HERE?

FINDING EACH OTHER AGAIN...

BUT I JUST CAN'T STOP MYSELF FROM COMING BACK...

...WILL JUST LEAD TO MORE HATRED.

To be continued in Volume 13.

Afterword

ONE DAY, I RECEIVED A CALL FROM MY EDITOR, WHO HAD STOPPED BY A WAGASHI *EVENT...*

I talked with one of the confectioners doing a demonstration, and we got on really well.

He even gave me his personal business card. Do you want to ask about interviewing his shop?

WHAT?

Y...YES, OF COURSE!!

MY EDITOR'S AMAZING...

I ACTUALLY WENT TO THAT SAME EVENT EARLIER...

RICE FLOUR.

AH...

WHAT'S THIS POWDER?

...BUT-THAT-WAS-THE EXTENT OF MY CONVERSATION.

BUT...

The interview's a go.

If there's anything in particular you want to do, I can ask.

TH-THEN...

...I'D LIKE TO MAKE SOME *WAGASHI* TOO, IF THAT'S AT ALL POSSI-BLE...

...I'M NOT SHY ABOUT MAKING PRESUMPTUOUS REQUESTS.

SO I WENT TO KITAYA IN ADACHI CITY, TOKYO...

...TO CONDUCT MY SECOND WAGASHI *SHOP INTERVIEW FOR THIS SERIES.*

BEFORE ENTERING THE KITCHEN...

...I DRESSED IN FULL GEAR TO AVOID BRINGING IN ANY GERMS.

Removing debris with a lint roller.

THEN AN AIR-SHOWER BLEW OFF ANY REMAINING TINY DEBRIS AND DUST!

I WAS STARTLED BY HOW POWERFUL THE BLAST ACTUALLY WAS...

KITAYA

THE CONFECTIONER I INTERVIEWED WAS KAZUHIRO OSHIO-SAN.

HE WAS AN AMAZING CONFECTIONER CERTIFIED AS A "SELECT WAGASHI ARTISAN."

THEY HAVE TO MAKE HUNDREDS OF SWEETS EVERY DAY, SO MOST OF IT IS AN ASSEMBLY-LINE PROCESS.

THE FACTORY WAS BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT, WITH LOTS OF MACHINES.

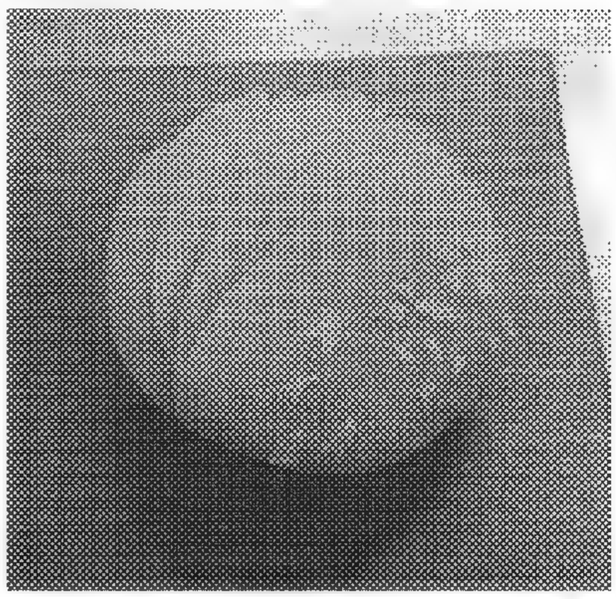
WOW, THAT'S NEAT. IT'S LIKE A *SHONEN* MANGA!

WE DON'T FIND OUT THE THEME FOR THE FINAL ROUND OF JUDGING UNTIL THE DAY OF THE TEST.

THE SELECT WAGASHI *ARTISAN IS AN IMPRESSIVE CERTIFICATION ONLY AWARDED TO THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED A MULTITUDE OF STRICT TESTS, WITH ONLY 138 CERTIFIED CONFECTIONERS NATIONWIDE!*

**Japanese for "nighttime cherry blossom."

WAGASHI *NAME:* "YOZAKURA**"



OSHIO-SAN ALSO MADE A WAGASHI *HE CAME UP WITH FOR MY VISIT (?) RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.*

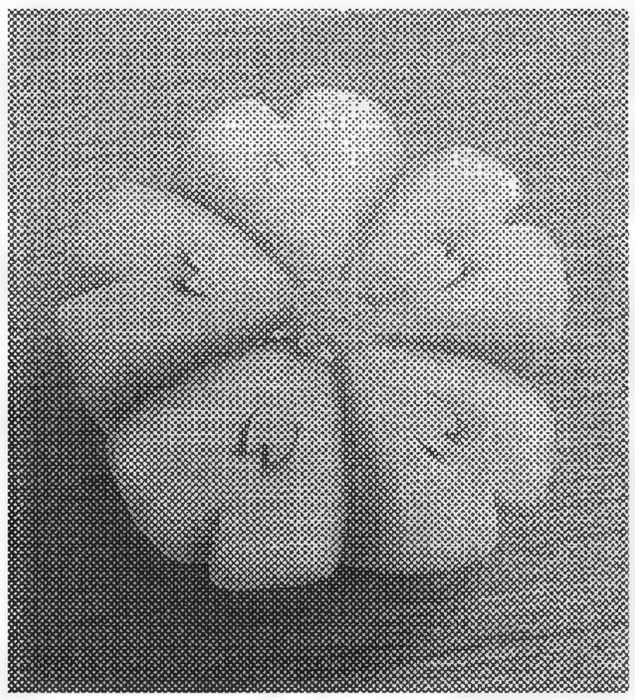
HE WAS ALSO VERY KIND FOR ACCEPTING MY REQUEST TO MAKE WAGASHI...

...AND THEN THIS HAPPENED...

SAME FOR ME WITH MANGA!

I COME UP WITH *WAGASHI* IDEAS IN THE BATH A LOT.

HE EVEN MADE A SPECIAL SAKURA SWEET.

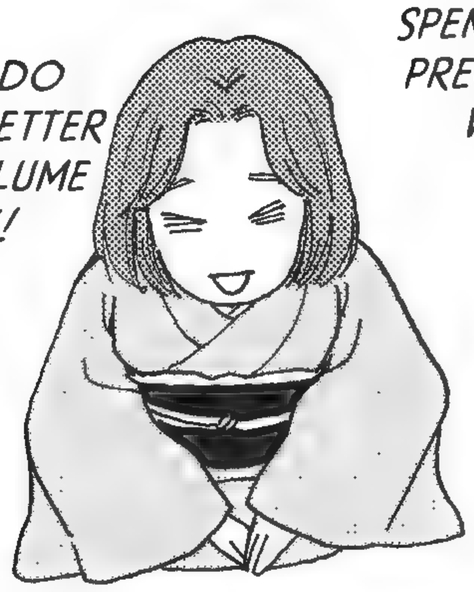


WOW, THAT MAKES ME SO HAPPY!

I READ YOUR MANGA. WE'LL MAKE *TSUBAKI** *WAGASHI* TODAY!

I'LL DO EVEN BETTER IN VOLUME 13!

THANK YOU SO, SO MUCH FOR SPENDING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME WITH ME.



*Japanese for "camellia."

Thank you so much,
Umesakura-sama, Doi-sama,
Naganawa-sama, Miyaji-sama,
Morizane-sama, and
my editor Chikada-sama

Thank you so much for your comments and
letters of encouragement!!

Natsumi Ando
c/o Kodansha BE · LOVE Editorial Department
2-12-21 Otowa, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-8001

Next Volume Preview

A story of love, fate, and *wagashi* Something's Wrong With Us

13

Natsumi Ando

I ALWAYS DREAMED...

THE CLASH

SECRETS

Finally, hidden affections are revealed....

Coming soon!

VOLUME 13

Translation Notes

wagashi, page 2
Traditional Japanese confections.

Joyasai, page 2
The New Year's Eve tradition where people go to pray at temples to cleanse themselves of all of their vices to start a fresh new year with a clean slate.

jo-namagashi, page 2
Fresh, artistic *wagashi* that are made with specific (usually seasonal) motifs.

yuzu, page 2
Yuzu is a type of citrus fruit used for its pleasant aroma in both savory dishes and sweets.

tsubaki mochi, page 2
A plain, bean paste-filled *domyoji* (a sticky mochi with a distinctively chunky texture made from re-steamed glutinous rice) placed between two camellia *(tsubaki)* leaves.

Tsubaki-san, page 14
In very formal households like the Takatsuki family, the mother will often address her children with the "-san" honorific. "-san" is akin to "Mr., Ms., Mx." etc. The proprietress generally addresses Tsubaki as "Tsubaki-san," but occasionally drops the honorific when not in front of others.

offering incense, page 29
In a traditional Buddhist funeral in Japan, each guest goes up to the coffin and offers incense to the departed, one by one. The style varies depending on different sects, but the funeral here follows the type where ground incense chips are provided next to a small container with charcoal on ash. Each person puts some incense on the charcoal and prays, following an order of how close they were to the deceased. On page 31, Tsubaki can be seen holding some incense up to his forehead, which is part of the ritual.

funeral attire, page 32
Similar to the different levels of formality for weddings in English-speaking countries, there are different levels of formality in attire for Japanese funerals, with rules for the type of material and dress. Generally, those closest to the deceased are expected to be in full formal attire. The black business suit that Tsubaki is wearing is considered semi-formal. This means that, aside from it not being the right type of suit, the material is not the deep matte black used for funeral wear. As the grandson, he should be wearing a formal funeral kimono or be in mourning attire.

Kanbotan and Secchuka, page 52
Jo-namagashi are often given artistic names that reflect a season. *Kanbotan* (literally "cold peony") is a variety of peony that blooms in the winter, and *secchuka* means "flower in the snow."

sakura yokan, page 54
Yokan is a smooth, jellied sweet made of bean paste and agar. In volume 9, Nao discovered her mother's unfulfilled wish in a love letter her mother never managed to send. That wish was to one day create a *yokan* with a *sakura* (cherry blossom) motif to sell at Kogetsuan, in memory of the times she walked with Itsuki down a path lined with *sakura* trees.

kingyokukan, page 54
A sweet made of transparent agar jelly, often with colorful shapes trapped inside. Only the tail end of the term can be seen in Nao's mother's notes.

Kaga, page 64
Prior to the Meiji Restoration, when much of Japan was Westernized, the country was separated into feudal domains ruled by lords. Most of the historic establishments in Kanazawa have been around since the area was still part of the Kaga domain, and their traditions date back to that time.

ryotei, page 76
A sophisticated establishment that serves fine traditional Japanese cuisine.

formal language, page 77
Formal Japanese is incredibly complicated, with numerous levels of formality used to either humble oneself or exalt another. There is "correct" language to use depending on the situation, and most people who live normal lives have no need to master all of the many complicated rules. In this case, as the newest member, Nao was expected to show her respect for the others by using the humblest language possible, but failed in her attempt.

Akuta-ryu, page 80
The formal Japanese way of tea is split into various *ryuha*, or schools, each practicing their own style of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony.

rakugan, page 86
Delicate, pressed sugar candies made with *wasanbon* sugar (a fine-grained sugar with a distinctive taste used for *wagashi*) and starch. They're made using traditional wooden molds and come in all kinds of colors and shapes.

manju, page 112
A bite-sized bun with sweet filling. Chestnut *manju* are filled with white bean paste mixed with candied chestnuts. They have glossy, dark brown tops to mimic what actual chestnuts look like.

Select Wagashi Artisan, page 165
A certification from the Japan Wagashi Association, which is open for entry every two years. It tests the skill of "making delicious, beautifully shaped *wagashi* efficiently" over two rounds of judging. Only a dozen or so confectioners are awarded the certification each time.

One of CLAMP's biggest hits returns in this definitive, premium, hardcover 20th anniversary collector's edition!

"A wonderfully entertaining story that would be a great installment in anybody's manga collection."
— Anime News Network

"CLAMP is an all-female manga-creating team whose feminine touch shows in this entertaining, sci-fi soap opera."
— Publishers Weekly

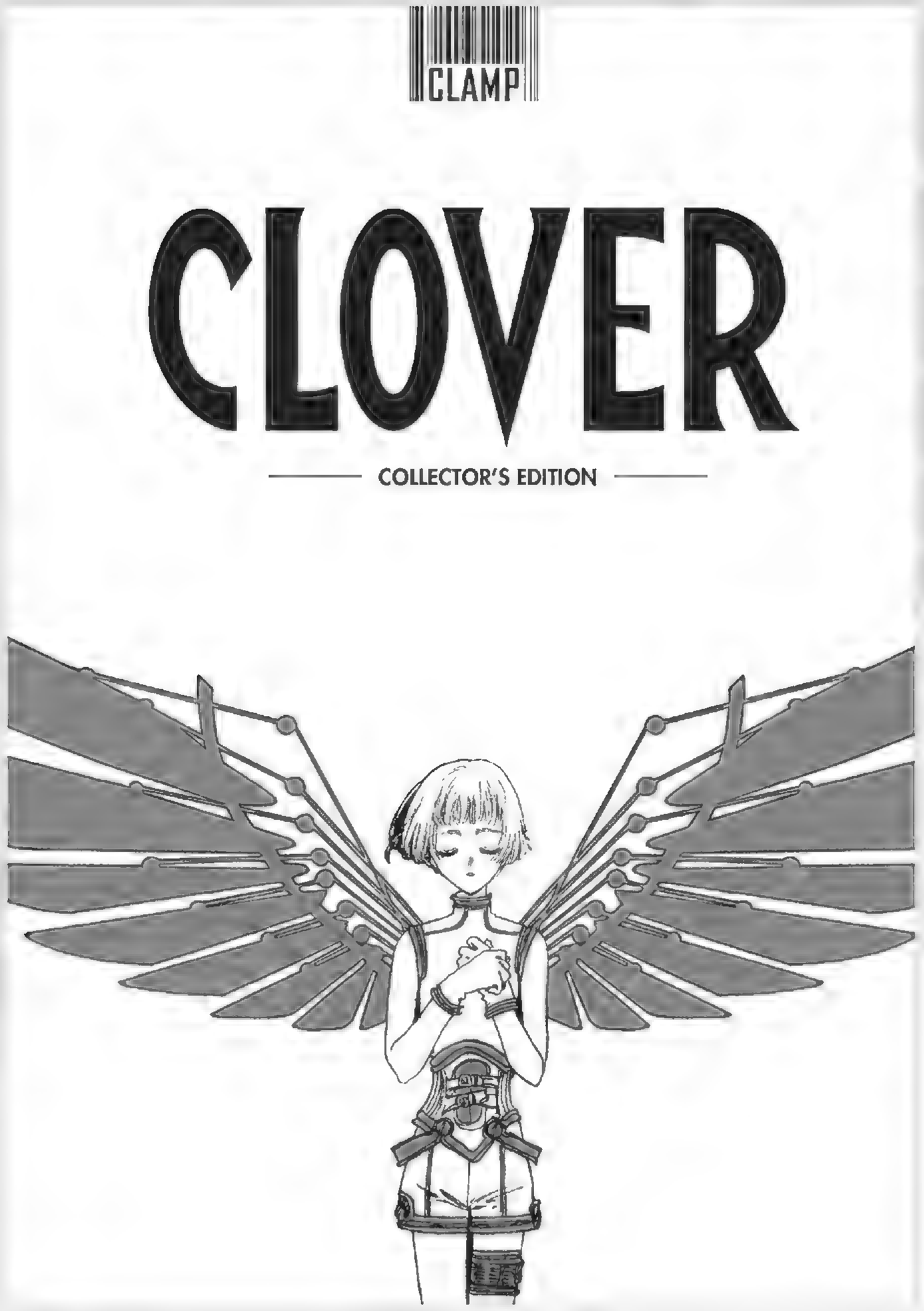
Chobits © CLAMP·ShigatsuTsuitachi CO.,LTD./Kodansha Ltd.

Poor college student Hideki is down on his luck. All he wants is a good job, a girlfriend, and his very own "persocom"—the latest and greatest in humanoid computer technology. Hideki's luck changes one night when he finds Chi—a persocom thrown out in a pile of trash. But Hideki soon discovers that there's much more to his cute new persocom than meets the eye.

KC KODANSHA COMICS

The art-deco cyberpunk classic from the creators of *xxxHOLiC* and *Cardcaptor Sakura*!

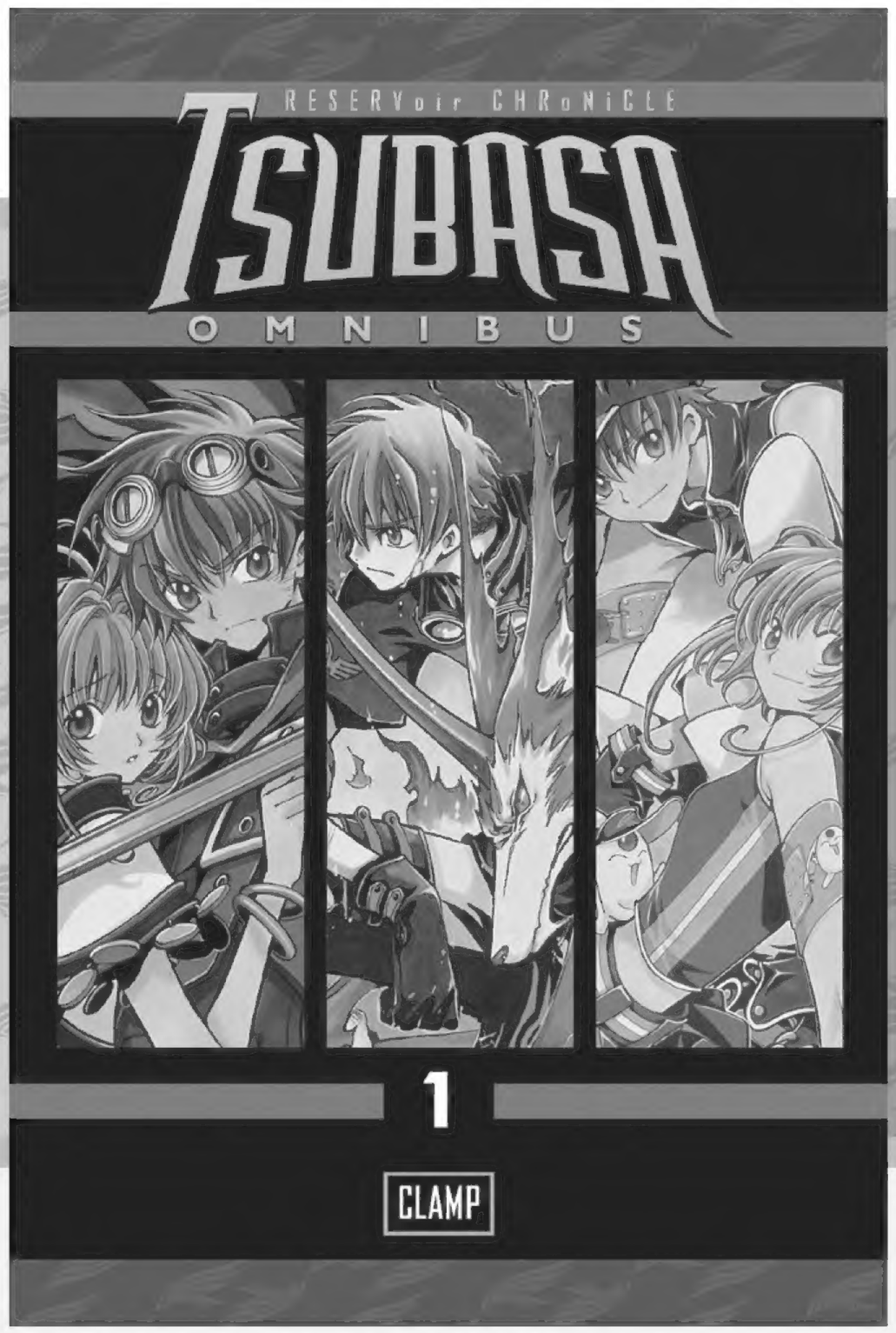
"Starred Review. This experimental sci-fi work from CLAMP reads like a romantic version of *AKIRA*."
—Publishers Weekly



Su was born into a bleak future, where the government keeps tight control over children with magical powers—codenamed "Clovers." With Su being the only "four-leaf" Clover in the world, she has been kept isolated nearly her whole life. Can ex-military agent Kazuhiko deliver her to the happiness she seeks? Experience the complete series in this hardcover edition, which also includes over twenty pages of ravishing color art!

KC
KODANSHA
COMICS

The beloved characters from *Cardcaptor Sakura* return in a brand new, reimagined fantasy adventure!



"[*Tsubasa*] takes readers on a fantastic ride that only gets more exhilarating with each successive chapter." —Anime News Network

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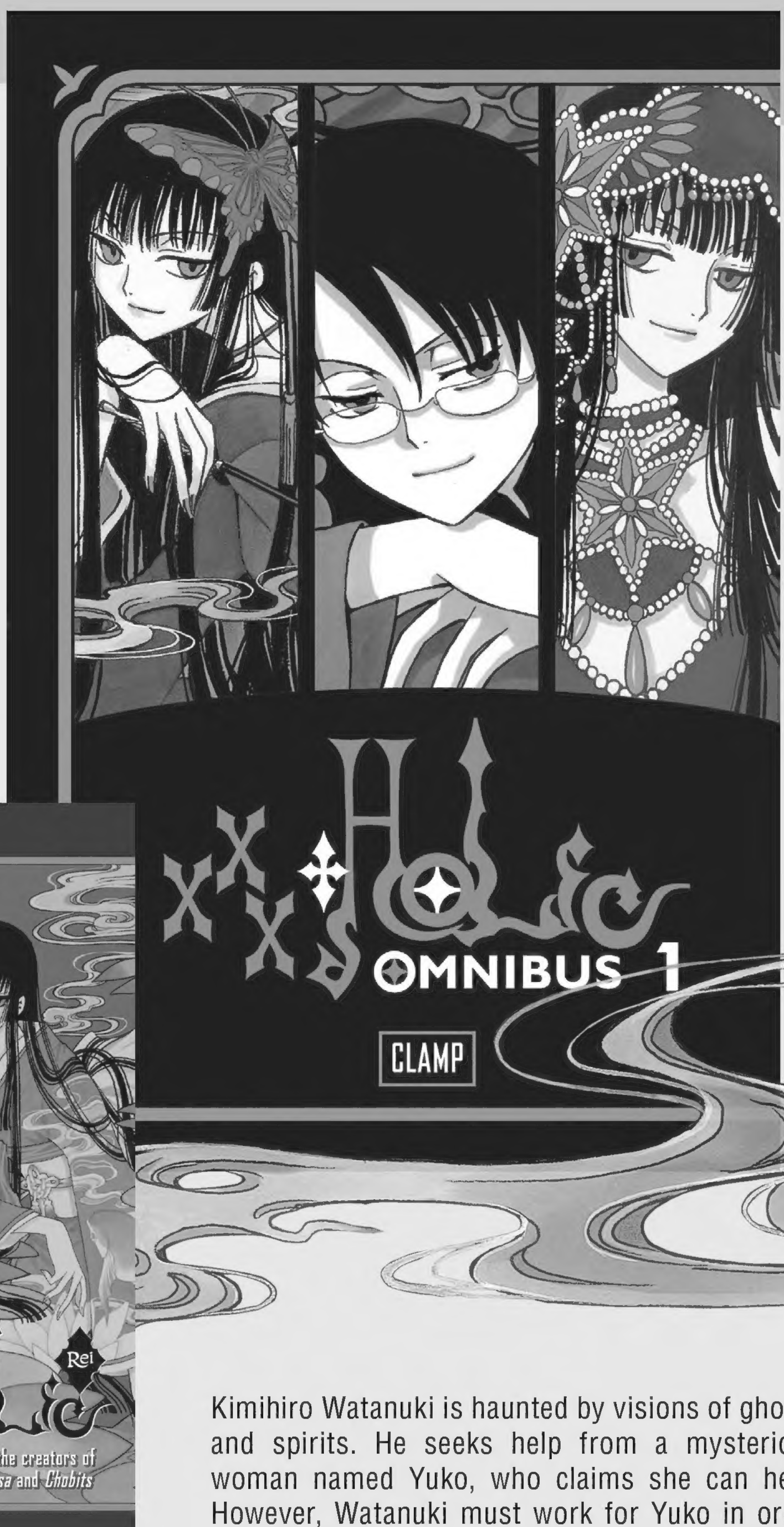

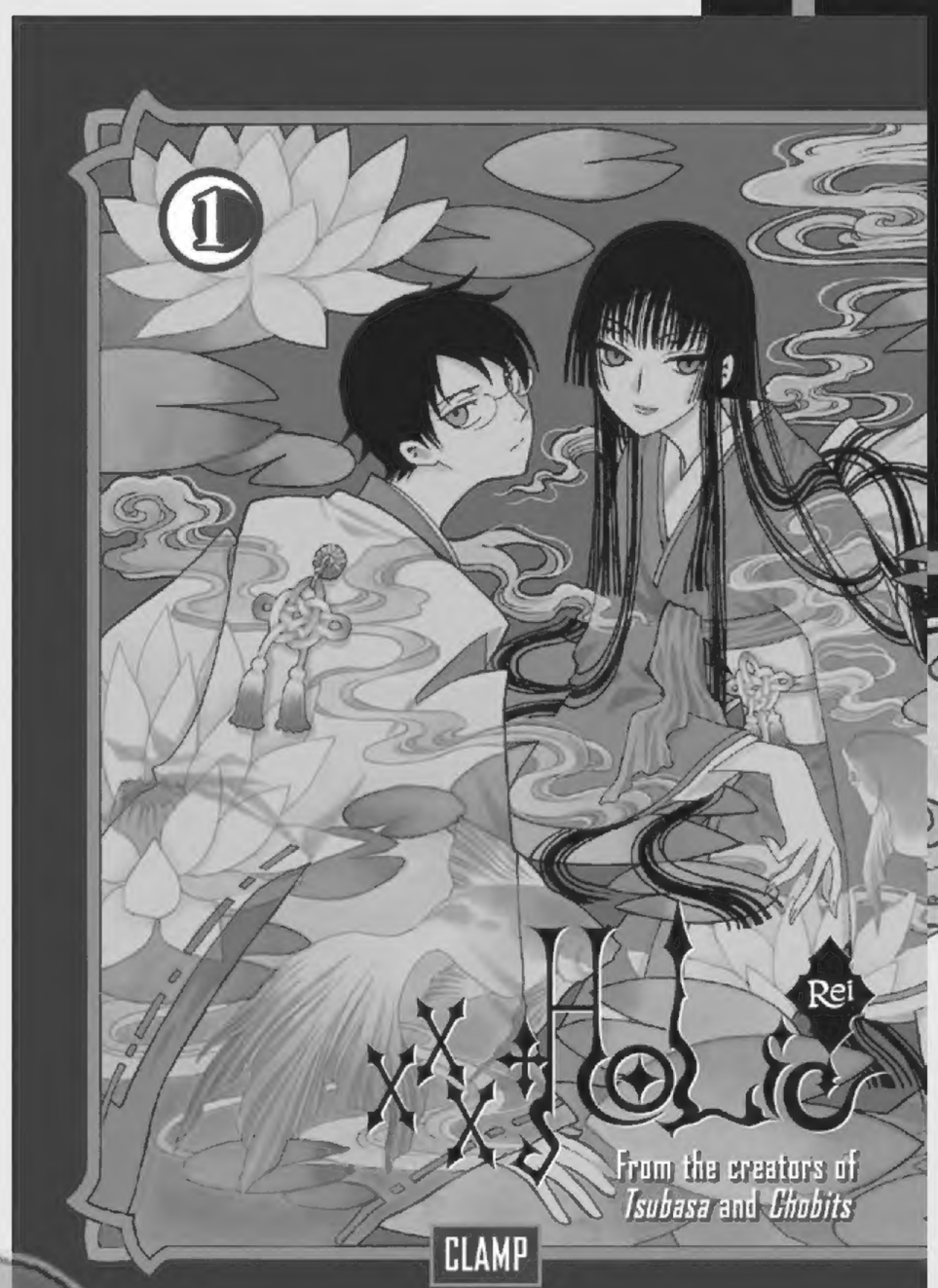

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Kimihiro Watanuki is haunted by visions of ghosts and spirits. He seeks help from a mysterious woman named Yuko, who claims she can help. However, Watanuki must work for Yuko in order to pay for her aid. Soon Watanuki finds himself employed in Yuko's shop, where he sees things and meets customers that are stranger than anything he could have ever imagined.

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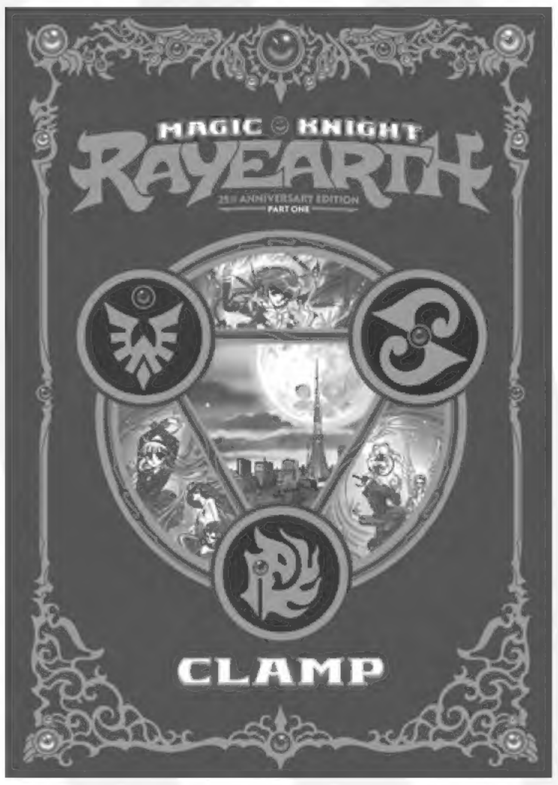

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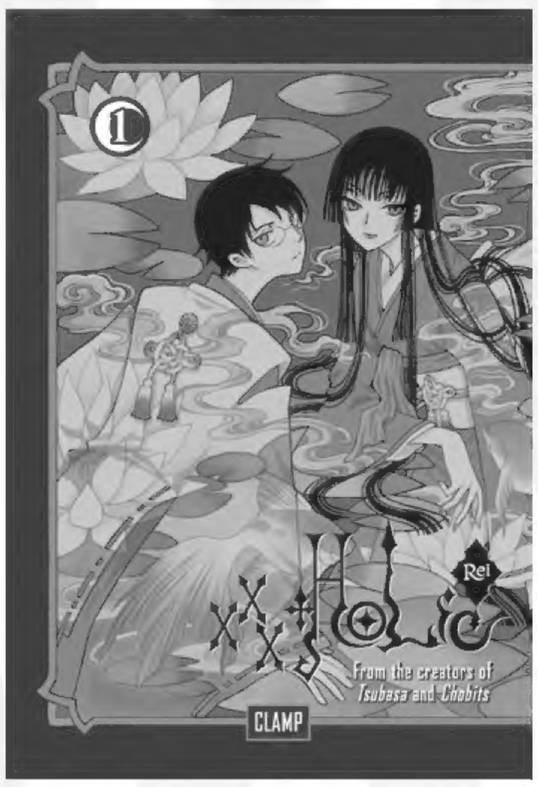
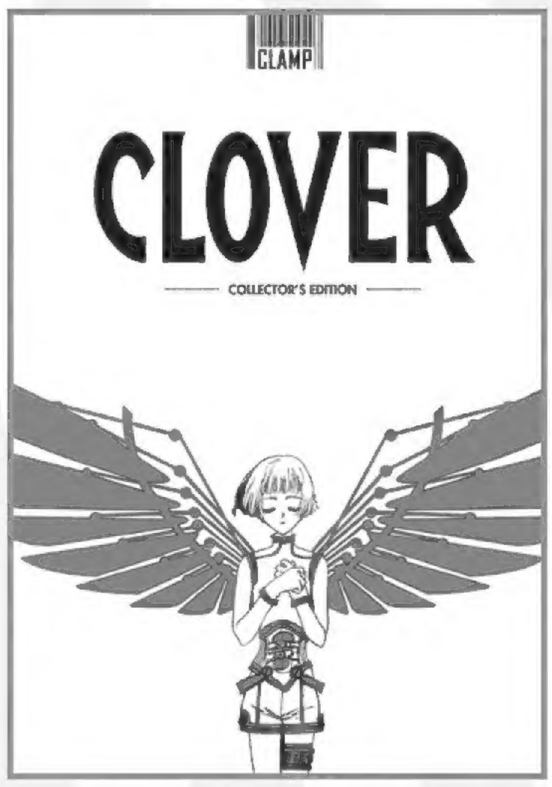


xxxHOLiC Rei



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Something's Wrong With Us 12

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